

IDAHO COMMUNITY TREES

News You
Can Use

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A NEWS BULLETIN FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO, THE IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LANDS—COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM AND THE IDAHO COMMUNITY FORESTRY ADVISORY COUNCIL

*Want to help save water?
See websites on page 3.*

Coordinator's Column

Sustainable Landscapes — Choosing the right trees for our climate

Very dry and extremely hot... This was the predominant weather forecast all summer as smoke permeated our communities from wildfires burning across the West. In Coeur d'Alene, we had the driest summer on record, receiving just 0.14" of precipitation between mid-June and mid-September (average for this period is 3.9"). According to the National Climate Data Center, Idaho experienced the warmest May through July since records were kept.

While the lack of moisture and high temperatures were extreme this summer, the trend is not unusual. Our statewide average annual rainfall is just 12.5 inches. In many parts of southern Idaho, less than 10" of rain falls each year. What *should* be unusual but is all too common are landscapes that require upwards of 30 inches of precipitation during the growing season. Consider that in the Eastern U.S., landscapes account for 30% of all water usage, but in the West, that figure is 60%!

In order to maximize the benefits trees provide—the outputs—we need to consider the inputs. These include costs of installation, irrigation and long-term maintenance. The higher these are, the less the benefits are actually worth. Because high water-use landscapes are typically more susceptible to heat stress, insects and disease, they will cost more for maintenance and irrigation as we compensate for their inability to tolerate our climate on their own.

The good news is that there are many native and non-native drought-tolerant plants that have adapted to our climate and can better tolerate our temperature/moisture extremes. We should consider using more of these in our landscapes. They are attractive, less expensive to maintain,

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Menan Tree Committee Helps Community

Menan is a small, rural community in southeastern Idaho. The city has been a Tree City USA for three years and benefits from a committed tree committee that has already completed several outstanding projects. Last year, the principal of



Gerry Bates

Under the watchful eyes of teachers, a cooperative project resulted in beautified school grounds at Midway Elementary.

Midway Elementary School, Jeryl Fluckiger, asked the committee if there were any grants available that his school could apply for to fund a landscape project at the school. Mr. Fluckiger had noticed all the trees and shrubs city officials had planted over the last few years and wanted to improve the school grounds as well.

The tree committee went to work and found a partner in Lowe's. The Lowe's 'Toolbox for Education' offers grants for school projects up to \$5,000. The application was not complicated and only took about an hour to complete. A few months later, school personnel were notified that they were being awarded 100% of their requested \$4,400. A check for the project was enclosed and no match was required.

The grant funded 300 feet of railroad ties as a landscape border, 960 retaining wall bricks, 12 yards of soil amendment, 300' of drip irrigation, 15 cubic yards of bark and 56 evergreens and flowering shrubs. Construction of the retaining wall and installation of the drip system was completed by volunteers. The school's 4th and 5th grade students shared in planting the shrubs, and then the 2nd and 3rd graders placed the bark. Finally, the 1st graders each had gallon milk jugs filled and refilled with water to pour on the shrubs. Last but not least, the kindergarten students removed the tags from the shrubs and collected all of the plastic pots which were returned to a local tree farm for reuse.

The students had a blast and asked when they could do it again, saying "Gardening is fun!" Volunteers who made the project a success

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Idaho Green Industry — Both Up and Down!

Idaho's green industry has topped \$834 million per year according to a study by the University of Idaho. This is a 26% increase between 1999 and 2004. Arborists did not share in the growth, however, with their sales decreasing from \$22 million to \$9 million over the same time span. Perhaps this means that a backlog of mature tree pruning and removal needs have been met. If so, the needs are sure to increase in the future based on tree sale figures. Wholesale nurseries and growers experienced growth going from \$58 million to \$258 million. The business segment with the second largest growth was landscape architecture/landscape maintenance/irrigation contracting/pesticide application.

Careers in Arboriculture DVD Available

Teachers, youth group leaders and parents may be interested in borrowing a copy of a new award-winning DVD for high school students about a future in the planting and care of trees. "Careers in Arboriculture" is a fast-paced, 10-minute DVD that explains the wide range of career opportunities in this field. In Idaho, career preparation in arboriculture is available at the University of Idaho, the College of Southern Idaho, and BYU—Idaho. To borrow the DVD, please contact the IDL-Community Forestry Program in Coeur d'Alene (see masthead).



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Help Promote the Arbor Day Poster Contest

Know a fifth grader or a fifth grade teacher? The 2007 Arbor Day Poster contest is open to any fifth grade student in the state whether in public or private school, or home taught. The contest is a great way to help promote environmental stewardship, education about trees and, of course, participation in Arbor Day. This year's theme, "Trees are terrific.... and forests are too," is designed to increase a student's understanding of ecosystems. The National Arbor Day Foundation, key sponsor of the contest, has also developed quality teaching materials that at the same time assist teachers in meeting the Idaho state science standards. Not only that, creating the posters is fun for the students and there are great awards for the winners:

- Savings Bonds to Idaho's 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners
- \$100 for the winning classroom teachers
- Recognition at the state's Arbor Day celebration in Boise
- Tree and plaque in honor of the statewide winner at our Capitol
- Winning schools receive a tree for an Arbor Day planting
- Idaho's winning poster will be entered in the national contest (Idaho has had two national winners!)

The deadline is March 12, 2007. If you're interested in a poster packet, contact the Idaho poster contest coordinator, Debbie Cook, at 208/378-6576 or deb939@aol.com.

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generally healthier and definitely more sustainable.

Low water-use trees can also provide a net increase in local water availability. Not only are their irrigation needs relatively small, but their crowns intercept a great deal of rain when it does fall, while their roots break up compacted soils, increasing groundwater absorption and aquifer recharge. In some areas of the country, trees are actually treated as a public utility because of the money they save in stormwater management.

Some helpful on-line sources of information on water-wise plant materials

and landscaping for the Intermountain West are found on page 3.

Additionally, maintaining a good composted, organic mulch layer greatly enhances the efficiency of watering, whether natural or through irrigation. Keeping 3-4" of mulch over as much of the root system as possible (though kept about 6" away from the trunk) will cool the roots, reduce compaction and add nutrients. Because it reduces soil moisture evaporation, mulch can also reduce water use by 25 to 50%!

Our weather is not likely to become substantially wetter or cooler and, as our cities

grow, water will become a scarcer and more valuable resource. Planting sustainable landscapes adapted to our climate will help protect the quality and quantity of our water for the future.

— David Stephenson
Community Forestry
Coordinator

Menan cont. from page 1

included the school principal and teachers, the Menan Tree Committee members and their families, and other residents of Menan who offered to help.

Waterwise Landscaping Resources

Here's plenty of help for communities that want nice landscaping but also want to conserve precious water resources.

Landscaping with Native Plants of the Intermountain Region – Boise State University, the BLM and Idaho Native Plant Society
(<http://www.id.blm.gov/publications/TR1730-3/index.htm>)

Moisture Stress: What Does That Mean for Trees?
– University of Idaho Forestry Extension
(<http://www.cnr.uidaho.edu/extforest/FM46.pdf>)

Colorado State University has two excellent lists of low-water use plant materials for the Intermountain West:

Shrubs (<http://www.coopext.colostate.edu/4dmg/Trees/Shrubs/xeris4.htm>)

Trees (<http://www.colostate.edu/Dept/CoopExt/4dmg/Trees/xeris5.htm>)

A number of on-line audio/visual conference presentations on selecting and using drought tolerant plants are available from Utah State University.
(http://extension.usu.edu/forestry/HomeTown/General_GreenConf2005.htm)

The Idaho Native Plant Society has a number of good resources. (<http://www.idahonativeplants.org/>)

How to Landscape to Save Water, Tree City USA Bulletin No. 17, The National Arbor Day Foundation. Free 8-page copy available from IDL – Community Forestry Program (See masthead for contact information.)

Upcoming Written Certification Exams for Arborist, Municipal Arborist, Utility Arborist, and Tree Worker

November 2, 2006 — Ogden, UT – evening exam¹

November 11, 2006 — Wilsonville, OR – morning exam²

December 8, 2006 — Salt Lake City, UT¹

January 20, 2007 — Boise, ID – morning exam²

June 16, 2007 — Boise, ID – morning exam²

Certified Tree Worker Skills Exam

June 16, 2007 — Boise, ID – morning exam²

¹ For information or to register, contact: Utah Chapter, International Society of Arboriculture at 801/446-8229 or email: Lisa@UtahUrbanForest.org.

² For information or to register, contact: Pacific Northwest Chapter, International Society of Arboriculture at 503/874-8263 or 217/355-9411 or email: info@pnwisa.org.

Note that applications must be submitted at least 20 days in advance of the exam.

Calendar

October 26

Ponderosa Pine Management in Urban Areas, Spokane, WA. (Contact PNW-ISA, (503/874-8263 or download registration brochure at www.pnwisa.org/Fa06.pdf)

October 28

Electricity & Arboriculture; Electrical Hardware Recognition; Basic Line Clearance Techniques, Orem, Utah. (Scott Bunker at 801/852-6920 or download registration brochure at www.utahurbanforest.org/events_fall_arbapp.htm)

November 2

Guide to Developing a Plant Health Care (PHC) Management System, Spokane, WA. (PNW-ISA, 503/874-8263 or download registration brochure at www.pnwisa.org/Fa06.pdf)

November 2-3

Utah Chapter-ISA Annual Conference, Ogden, Utah. (Lisa at 801/446-8229 or download registration brochure at www.utahurbanforest.org/events/Fall_Conference_2006.pdf)

November 3

Production Tree Planting Techniques Workshop, Coeur d'Alene, ID. (Contact Karen Haskew at karenh@cdaid.org for registration information)

November 9

Winter Tree Identification, Spokane, WA. (PNW-ISA, 503/874-8263 or download registration brochure at <http://www.pnwisa.org/Fa06.pdf>)

November 10-11

Certified Arborist Training Course, Idaho Falls, ID. (Contact Gerry Bates at 208/681-5964 or gabates@cablone.net for more information)

November 11

Line Clearance Pruning; Recognizing Electrical Hazards, Orem, Utah. (Lisa at 801/446-8229 or download registration brochure at www.utahurbanforest.org/events_fall_arbapp.htm)

December 2

Tree Biology & the Art & Science of Pruning, Orem, Utah. (Lisa at 801/446-8229 or download registration brochure at www.utahurbanforest.org/events_fall_arbapp.htm)

January 17-19, 2007

Idaho Horticulture Expo, Boise Centre on the Grove, Boise. (Ann Bates, 800/INA-GROW or www.inlagrow.org/expo2007.htm)

February 7-9, 2007

Inland Northwest Turf, Tree & Landscape Conference, Coeur d'Alene Resort, CDA (WSU Conference Office at 800/942-4978 or <http://capps.wsu.edu/ttlc/>)



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Tree tip

Shade Your Asphalt – For Longer Life



Bowman & Associates

A lovely shaded street in Sandpoint, Idaho

Longer life of the surface, that is! A study by the USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station found that tree shade over residential streets leads to better performance of asphalt pavements. Shaded asphalt outperformed unshaded asphalt by more than 2 to 1. Less cracking, rutting, etc. led to less need for slurry seals or early replacement. In the study, savings of around \$.66/square foot over 30 years were typical.

Shaded parking lots yield the same advantage along with greater comfort and satisfied store customers, and less air pollution resulting from heated gas tanks.